

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 021111Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3999

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: YADIN'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

REFS: (A) TEL AVIV 7943; (B) TEL AVIV 3817

BEGIN SUMMARY: YADIN'S NEW PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, HAS POTENTIAL APPEAL AMONG ISRAEL'S DISSATISFIED VOTERS. HIS IMAGE IS THAT OF A NEWCOMER UNTAINTED BY THE EXISTING POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT. HIS SUCCESS WILL DEPEND TO A DEGREE ON HIS ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO FIND AND ACCEPT SUPPORT FROM LIKE-MINDED CENTRIST PARTIES, AND ON WHETHER THE LABOR ALIGNMENT IS ABLE TO PULL ITSELF TOGETHER BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY YIGAEI YADIN ON NOVEMBER 22 OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTY - THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT - IS A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT WHICH COULD RUN COUNTER TO THE RECENT TREND TOWARD FRAGMENTATION IN THE ISRAELI POLITICAL STRUCTURE. UNLIKE THE FREE CENTER'S SPLIT FROM THE LIKUD (TEL AVIV 7166),

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ARIK SHARON'S DEFECTION FROM THE LIKUD (TEL AVIV 7772)

AND THE CONTEMPLATED WALKOUT BY THE INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY FROM THE COALITION GOVERNMENT (TEL AVIV 7702), THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IS NOT A SPINOFF FROM A LARGER MASS. LIKE THOSE, HOWEVER, IT CONSTITUTES ONE MORE CLAIMANT TO WHAT IS PERCEIVED AS THE GROWING PROTEST VOTE.

2. A LARGE BLOCK OF VOTERS IS PATENTLY DISSATISFIED WITH THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPINGS: THE RULING LABOR ALIGNMENT AND ITS CHIEF OPPOSITION, THE LIKUD. THE LABOR-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT SEEMS UNABLE TO COPE WITH LABOR UNREST, RAMPANT INFLATION AND THE BOP DEFICIT, AND THE LABOR ALIGNMENT ITSELF IS PLAGUED BY THE RABIN-PERES RIVALRY, THE SMELL OF CORRUPTION, THE THREATENED WALKOUT BY MAPAM AND FRICTION WITH THE HISTADRUT. WITH AN UNIMAGINATIVE, STULTIFYING LEADERSHIP, THE LIKUD, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEMS INCAPABLE OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE ALIGNMENT'S PROBLEMS.

3. YADIN'S ASSETS ARE NOT INCONSIDERABLE. AN ARCHAEOLOGIST OF INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AND FORMER SUCCESSFUL CHIEF OF STAFF, YADIN HAS HERETOFORE BEEN MORE ABOVE THAN OUT OF POLITICS. HIS IMAGE IS ONE OF INTEGRITY, OF THE THOUGHTFUL INTELLECTUAL AND DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT UNSULLIED BY PARTY POLITICS. HIS VIEWS, AS OUTLINED IN HIS SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS SINCE ANNOUNCING LAST MAY 25 (REFTEL) THAT HE WAS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP, HAVE BEEN DECIDEDLY MODERATE RE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARABS AND REFORMIST/LIBERAL ON DOMESTIC MATTERS. HOWEVER, AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 22, YADIN'S FORMULATION OF HIS NEGOTIATING POSITION WITH ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS, WHILE SUFFICIENTLY VAGUE TO ALLOW VARIOUS OPTIONS, SEEMED TO HARDEN ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND ON ISRAEL'S EASTERN FRONTIER (REFTEL A).

4. MOST OF THE EMPHASIS AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, WAS ON ELECTORAL REFORM AND STREAMLINING THE CABINET. SINCE SEVERAL OF THE MOVEMENT'S CO-FOUNDERS INTRODUCED BY YADIN AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR HAWKISH VIEWS, IT APPEARS THAT YADIN AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE PUT HIGHER PRIORITIES ON THEIR DOMESTIC PROGRAM AND HAVE COMPROMISED THEIR DIFFERENCES ON FOREIGN POLICY. IN ANY EVENT, THE EFFECT WILL BE TO BROADEN YADIN'S APPEAL ON THE RIGHT. HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOLD ON THE CENTER/LEFT'S AFFECTIONS IS REGARDED AS RELATIVELY MORE SECURE. FOR EXAMPLE, YADIN APPEARS ALREADY TO HAVE ATTRACTED SHINUI, A PROTEST MOVEMENT SPAWNED BY THE DISSATISFACTION FOLLOWING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR AND LED BY HAARETZ EDITOR AMNON RUBENSTEIN. SHINUI, FAVORING FAR-REACHING TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS AS WELL AS THOROUGH-GOING REFORMS, IS EXPECTED TO COMBINE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, ADDING TO ITS CREDENTIALS AS A MODERATE PARTY.

5. THUS, YADIN IS IN A POSITION TO ATTRACT BOTH DISAFFECTED LABOR PARTY VOTERS UNWILLING TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO THE LIKUD, AND THE MANY ISRAELIS NOT NORMALLY LIKUD CONSTITUENTS WHO VOTED LIKUD IN DECEMBER 1973 AS A PROTEST AGAINST THE YOM KIPPUR WAR FAILURES. IF HE SUCCEEDS IN FORGING ALLIANCES WITH OTHER CENTER PARTIES, I.E., ILP, CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND FREE CENTER, AND CONCEIVABLY SHARON'S NEW PARTY, THE RESULT COULD CONSTITUTE AN EFFECTIVE THIRD FORCE IN ISRAELI POLITICS. HE SAYS THAT HE IS NOT INTERESTED IN MERGING WITH OTHER PARTIES, BUT COMBINING WITH EXISTING PARTIES IS PROBABLY THE ONLY WAY FOR HIM TO ESTABLISH A REAL POWER BASE.

6. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO GAUGE YADIN'S PROSPECTS. SINCE HE WILL CAMPAIGN CHIEFLY ON INTERNAL REFORM, A CRISIS ON ISRAEL'S BORDERS OR A CRUNCH IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT HIS BID FOR POWER BY MAKING THE FOREIGN POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LABOR AND LIKUD "THE" CAMPAIGN ISSUE. ASIDE FROM SUCH AN EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT, THE CHANCES OF YADIN'S SUCCESS DEPEND IN GREAT MEASURE ON HIS ABILITY TO ATTRACT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND TO FORM ALLIANCES WITH EXISTING PARTIES OF THE CENTER. TOON

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